The issue concerning Japanese Patents 2000-519099 and 11-328033 has been investigated. These documents were cited in the corresponding Japanese Office Action, and do not appear to be related to "cleaning dust from a blade" or "license transfer, as noted by the Examiner. Copies of the documents are submitted herewith as an attachment to this response.

The Abstract was objected to for exceeding 150 words and for containing indicia. The Abstract has been shortened by amendment to less than 150 words, as required. Indicia have not been deleted from the abstract since MPEP 608.01(b) does not prohibit indicia in the abstract. Indicia in the abstract help the reader to quickly understand the invention, which is, of course, desirable and specifically advocated in MPEP 608.01(b).

The specification has been amended in numerous places to correct grammatical errors and to improve clarity. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1, 2, 4, and 5 have been amended to make them more clear and easier to understand, and to correct grammatical errors. The scope of claims 1, 2, 4, and 5 has not been changed in any way. Only redundant limitations have been removed.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese patent 09-265731 to Ozawa et al. in view of European patent 0-762417 A2 to Sako et al. This rejection is traversed.

The present invention provides an audio playback and recording apparatus having a processor (processing section) that stores compressed digital audio in combination with attribution data. The attribution data indicates the type of compression used in the compressed digital data. As noted in the present specification (see, for example page 2, lines 23-27), this essential feature of the invention allows many different types of compression techniques to be utilized. This is an advantage in many instances because it allows for broader compatibility with other devices. Also, it allows a compression technique to be selected in accordance with its particular advantages in a given situation.

The Examiner has indicated that Ozawa does not provide any details on the format or means by which the compression input is determined (see page 5 of office action). Th Examiner argues that Sako et al. teaches attribution data for identifying a compression method. The ID signal appendage 3 and ID signal detection of Fig. 4 are erroneously identified by the Examiner as teaching attribution data as defined in the

present invention. Also, text on page 11, line 29 is erroneously identified as teaching attribution data. Sako et al. teaches an "identification signal" that is very different from the attribution data of the present invention. The identification signal of Sako et al. is a series of bits appended to video or audio or other data that is used to authenticate the data, or for other identification purposes. For example, the identification signal can be a "maker ID, producer ID, formatter ID, copying management information, such as copying inhibit/permit, of the key information for encryption", as recited on page 5 lines 31-32. See also page 11, lines 29-31. Sako et al. teaches that the identification signal can be used to distinguish original copies or duplicate copies of data (see page 5, lines 28-30). Completely absent from Sako et al. is any suggestion that the identification signal can be used to identify a compression technique employed in compressing an associated audio signal, as required in the present claims. Because neither Ozawa nor Sako teach or suggest anything with respect to attribution data indicating a type of a compression of said compressed digital audio data as is required in independent claim 1, the proposed combination of Ozawa et al. and Sako et al. does not meet or make obvious the limitations of claim 1, and the rejection of claim 1 and all of its dependent claims should now be withdrawn.

Regarding claim 2, the proposed combination of Ozawa et al. and Sako et al. cannot "transfer digital audio data *and attribution data* to an external apparatus...", as recited in claim 2. This is because Sako et al. does not teach or suggest the use of attribution data as used in the present invention, as noted above. Hence, the rejection of claim 2 is erroneous and must be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered, that claims 1-6 be allowed, and that the application be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

A provisional petition is hereby made for any extension of time necessary for the continued pendency during the life of this application. Please charge any fees for such provisional petition and any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees for

the petition or for entry of this amendment to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-2041 (Whitham, Curtis & Christofferson P.C.).

Respectfully submitted,

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